

Two Christmas Dialogues for Senior Grades

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Living the Christmas Spirit

Lost on Christmas Eve

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LIVING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

FOR ANY NUMBER OF GIRLS.

Characters : Lizzie, Helen, Crystal, Stella, Mildred, Mabel, each of whom has a speaking part, and as many more school girls of about the same size as the stage will conveniently accommodate.

SCENE : A school dressing-room. Rows of hooks at rear, on which hang girls' hats and wraps—as many as possible. No chairs or other furniture.

COSTUMES : Ordinary suits. In the first act the girls are arraying themselves for the street during the dialogue. In the second act they enter wearing their wraps, etc., which they remove and hang up during the dialogue.

NOTE : Several days are supposed to elapse between the first and second acts. This fact should be printed upon the programs or announced by the stage manager.

The characters are all "discovered at rise"—i.e. they are on the stage when the curtain rises. They are at the rear of the stage donning wraps, etc.

ACT I.

LIZZIE : That is exactly what she said of you, Crystal, that you are "a perfect nuisance."

CRYSTAL : Choice language for a girl of her pretensions.

HELEN : That is it, Crystal, you have struck the right word ; she is all pretension and nothing else, and she—

CRYSTAL (*quickly interrupting*). Oh, but I didn't mean it that way at all. You picked me up too quickly.

STELLA : Of course you didn't ; we all know you too well to suppose that you ever mean anything unkind of anyone, but at the same time Helen is right ; Lucy is all pretension. But what have you done to her that she should say unkind things of you ?

HELEN : Is it possible you don't know ? But then, I forgot you are not in the French class. M'll'e gives Crystal all the difficult sentences to translate, and heartily commends the ease with which she does it.

MILDRED : And you don't mean to say that Lucy is offended because she doesn't get the hard passages to wrestle with ? That's too funny for anything. I should think she'd just adore Crystal for throwing herself, or rather, letting herself be thrown into the breach for her country.

HELEN (*laughing*) : Yes, that's the way all the rest of us feel, but the trouble is with Lucy that she thinks no one is quite so clever as herself, and she is especially proud of her proficiency in French, her mother having lived a whole year in Paris. Before Crystal came into the class she wore all the laurels, but now she doesn't have the satisfaction of seeing even one little leaf thrown at her. (*Laughter.*)

LOUISE : I suppose it is rather hard on her. But that is no reason why she should say a thing of that kind about one of her classmates, and if I were you, Crystal, I'd pay her off richly for her impudence.

ALL : So would I, so would I. (*MABEL enters from right.*)

LIZZIE (*aside to CRYSTAL, they walk apart*) : There's your chance, Crystal. Mabel is giving a Christmas Eve party and she was asking me about the different girls. You remember, she is new to this town. When she asked me about Lucy I told her to inquire of you, that

you knew more about her than any one of us. I did it purposely, for it seemed just the right opportunity for you to get even with Lucy.

CRYSTAL: You were very thoughtful, I am sure. (*Crosses over. MABEL meets her at center.*)

MABEL (*aside*): Tell me, Crystal, how is it with Lucy? Lizzie refused to say a word about her; she referred me to you. Isn't she a desirable girl to have around?

CRYSTAL (*going closer to group, and speaking so that all can hear*): I am glad that you are inviting Lucy to your party, Mabel. She is so bright and witty that she is an addition to any company. (*Moves to left exit. Cries of "Where are you going, Crystal?"*)

CRYSTAL (*without turning around*): To the school-room, after my history. (*Cries of "Hurry up, hurry up. We're going."*) Don't wait for me. I have some errands to do on the way home. (*Exit at the left.*)

MABEL: Well, she's a queer girl; not a word against Lucy. (*To LIZZIE*): I thought you said they were not good friends.

LIZZIE: They are not, and if I were you I'd leave Lucy out. We don't any of us like her.

MABEL: But, why not? Crystal said she is an addition to any party, and I don't need to be told that she is lively and interesting.

STELLA: Oh, come on, girls, and stop bothering about Lucy. (*Exeunt all at right, noisily.*)

CRYSTAL (*enters at left, carrying book*): All gone. Well, I'm glad of it. (*Goes up and puts on hat, etc.*) I'm tired of hearing about Lucy's envy of me. Why will girls tell each other things of that kind? Just now, too, when the blessed Christmas time is so near and we ought to be at peace with all the world. (*Exit at right.*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE : Same as in Act I.

(Enter MABEL and LIZZIE. They go to rear, remove wraps and come down.)

LIZZIE : Of course it's too bad for Lucy, though I must confess I should feel much worse if it were one of the other girls.

MABEL : Would you ? That isn't very kind, is it ?

LIZZIE : Maybe not, but she has made herself very disagreeable to many of us. Had you invited her to your party ?

MABEL : Certainly.

LIZZIE : Does Crystal know it ? (Enter CRYSTAL at right, carrying books. Comes down.) Oh, Crystal, had you heard that your dear friend Lucy slipped on the ice last night and broke her ankle ?

CRYSTAL : Oh, I'm so sorry; poor girl. And your party is to-morrow night, Mabel, and the next day is Christmas. Poor Lucy ; think of it, girls, to have to spend one's Christmas in bed and in pain. How sad! (Goes to rear and removes wraps.) What can we do for her ? Can't you girls think of something ?

LIZZIE (sarcastically): Oh, yes, of course we'll all visit her in a body, take her ice cream and pound cake, and cover her bed with roses at three dollars a dozen.

CRYSTAL (coming down): So we can, the very thing, Lizzie. How clever of you to think of it. (Takes paper and pencil from among her books.) I'll give half a dollar (writes), how much will you give, Lizzie ?

LIZZIE : How much will I give ? Crystal, you're not in earnest ?

CRYSTAL : I certainly am. How much ?

LIZZIE (angrily): Not a cent. I wouldn't be a chump and a goody-goody rolled into one.

CRYSTAL : I'm not. I'm just trying to think how I'd feel in Lucy's place. Mabel ?

MABEL : Put me down for half a dollar—here's the money now. (*Takes it from her pocket-book.*) Better join us, Lizzie.

LIZZIE : Indeed, I'll do nothing of the kind. (*Goes up. Exit CRYSTAL at right.*)

MABEL : Oh well, Lizzie, don't be so unrelenting. I am sure if Crystal can forgive Lucy, the rest of you should be able to do so.

LIZZIE (*coming down*) : I was never so disgusted with anyone as I am with Crystal. She never paid much attention to Lucy in any way until I told her the mean thing she said about her, and since then she has seemed to exert herself to be nice to her.

MABEL : She believes in "turning the other cheek," evidently.

LIZZIE : Well, she'll never win Lucy over in that way ; she'll only dislike her all the more for being a champion.

MABEL : Don't be so sure of that. (*Enter STELLA, HELEN, MILDRED and others. They go up, removing wraps during talk.*)

STELLA : Girls, what do you think ? Crystal is getting even with Lucy after all.

LIZZIE : Oh, is she ? Good. What is she doing ? Tell me, quick !

HELEN : Indeed she is. (*Laughing.*) I hope she'll get even with me the same way if anything ever happens to me.

MILDRED : It isn't likely she will, for you've never abused her.

LIZZIE : Oh, I see what you mean. Did you girls subscribe anything ?

ALL : Of course ; how could we help it ?

● MILDRED : I don't believe there's a girl in the class that Lucy hasn't been disagreeable to in one way or another, but we were all ashamed to show any resentment when Crystal began to talk about making peace with everybody at Christmas time, and about poor Lucy spending her Christmas in bed, and so on. (*Enter CRYSTAL at right ; crosses over.*)

LIZZIE : I suppose you think you are getting even in fine shape now ? I wouldn't make a big idiot of myself if I were you.

CRYSTAL (*stopping at center*) : I am not even with you yet, Lizzie, but I shall be when I can bring to you something said about you as kind as the speech you reported to me was unkind. I am eagerly watching for that opportunity. (*Exit at left.*)

(*Laughter and cries of "Good, good" from the others.*)

MILDRED : Better let her alone, Lizzie, you always seem to get the worst of it.

LIZZIE : That I will. I'll have nothing more to do with her, and I'll never even speak to her again.

MILDRED : Oh, yes, you will, for she'll have something to do with you, you may depend on that.

HELEN : Yes, and I don't believe you can stay angry with her long, for she is the kind of girl that carries her Christmas spirit with her all the year round.

(*Bell rings, all rush out at left noisily.*)

Curtain.

LOST ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHARACTERS :

Mr. and Mrs. Manley. Bridget, a domestic.
Mamie } their children. Jack, a sailor.
Dot Mr. Johns, an amateur detective.

ACT I.

(Sitting room of Mr. Manley's house. This can be very simply arranged by spreading a rug on the platform, bringing in a chair or two, a small table with a few books on it, and perhaps a few flowers. A girl about twelve or fourteen years of age may personate "Mamie," and a very small child will answer for "Dot." This little girl must be particularly infantine in looks and manner, and it is probable that a little girl, too young for school, can be borrowed for the occasion.)

DOT : Mamie, what is Christmas ? Mamma says to-morrow is Christmas, and will Santa Claus come down and put things in little children's stockings ?

MAMIE : Yes, dear, to-morrow is Christmas day, and everybody expects a present then. Good Santa Claus comes down the chimney in the night, they say, and fills little boys' and girls' stockings with all sorts of nice things.

DOT : Does he, really ! and will he bring me a nice new dolly if I ask him ? Where can I find him ?

MAMIE : Oh, he comes in a sleigh drawn by eight reindeer. He rides over the house-tops. He carries a pack of toys on his back. But you must go to bed early, for Santa Claus has a great many children to visit to-night, and he wants them all to be in bed.

DOT : Yes, sister, I'll go—only I want to look for that good man that puts things in little girls' stockings, and ask him not to forget my new dolly.

(Exit Dot.)

MAMIE : How little it takes to please a child ! I often wish I were a little child again, and believed that Santa Claus is a real person, as I used to. Really, I almost believe in him now. But I must go and finish dressing Dotty's doll, now that she is in bed. She would be so disappointed not to find one in her stocking in the morning.

(Exit Mamie.)

ACT II.

(For this act the stage should be made to look like a street. Children can be easily dressed to look like persons doing Christmas shopping. with bundles in their hands ; they pass to and fro on the stage as if hurrying home. Have this scene a brisk one, representing the pleasant bustle of Christmas, with old and young, in all sorts of dress—a little ragged and grotesque will not do any harm if wisely managed. Dot is found lying half asleep on one side of the stage, bareheaded, and curled up beside the wall, which could represent a building. " Jack," a boy sixteen years old, is dressed in a blue sailor costume, with a broad collar, and a nautical cap. The temperament of this boy should be jocose, full of good cheer, and he should carry himself in a jaunty, sailor-like way.)

(Enter JACK, whistling, " A Life on the Ocean Wave." Notices a child asleep on the doorsteps of a house, and stops.)

Hello ! What's this ! Shiver my timbers, if it isn't a little girl shipwrecked here on this bleak coast, this stormy night. (Looks at her steadily, touches, and wakens her.) Hello, Sis ! wake up, and tell me yer name.

CHILD (*Half awake*) : My name is Dotty.

JACK : Yes, but haven't yer another name ?

DOT : Papa calls me his precious.

JACK : Who is yer papa ? What's his name ?

DOT : His name is papa.

JACK : But his other name. Isn't it Mr. ——— something ?

Dor : No, it is papa, dear papa ; that is all I call him.

JACK : Where do you live ?

Dor : I live at home.

JACK : What are you out here for ? Why ain't ye at home ?

Dor : I'm trying to find Santa Claus. Be you Santa Claus ?

JACK No, I'm not Santa Claus, and I don't believe you'll find him out here in the storm. Show me your way home, and I'll take you there.

Dor : Home's lost. I can't find it (*begins to cry.*)

JACK : Oh, dear, what shall I do ? The Sea Foam sails as soon as the wind has shifted, and it is beginning to change now. If I ain't there soon, the cap'n 'll think I've deserted, and I can't take her home when she can't tell me who she is nor where she lives. I can't leave her here to freeze, that's certain, and Christmas night too, of all others—the night that tells of that one when the Great Cap'n left His home in glory to seek and save the lost. I couldn't feel that I belonged to Him if I left one of His little ones to suffer. What shall I do ? (*Stops and thinks.*) I know. I'll take her to the cap'n of the Sea Foam. He has a good heart, and he can tell what to do. Come along, little shipmate, we'll find a snugger harbor than this storm-beaten shore.

Dor : Do you know Santa Claus ?

JACK : I used to know about him when I was a lad. and I'll help you to try find him. (*Jack picks her up and goes off with her in his arms.*)

ACT III.

Mr. Manley's House.

(Stage setting same at Act I. Mr. and Mrs. Manley personated by a large boy and girl, dressed quietly. Mrs. Manley is crying, as Mr. Manley enters with coat and hat on, followed by detective in citizen dress, and looking very important. Bridget is a bright character and a good deal should be made of her. She should wear the servant's dress, and carry a broom, and be able to give a good Irish accent.)

MRS. MANLEY (*in distress*): Oh dear! Oh dear! where can my baby be? (*Enter MR. MANLEY, followed by MR. JOHNS, an amateur detective.*) Oh, have you found our baby?

MR. MANLEY: No, my dear, I am sorry to say I have not. I have been up and down the streets asking every one I met, without finding the slightest trace, except—perhaps—bear up as well as you can, my dear, I got no tidings of our child until I met this gentleman (*pointing to Mr. Johns*), who told me that he saw a sailor two hours or more ago, going in the direction of the wharves with a child in his arms.

MRS. MANLEY (*in agony*): Oh, it was my baby; it was our darling, and she is lost, lost!

BRIDGET: The murderin' ould villain! the pirate! the kidnapper! Me ould mither used to tell me of a sailor——

MR. MANLEY: Be still, Bridget.

MRS. MANLEY: Could you not find the vessel he belonged to?

MR. MANLEY: I learned its name, and also the fact that the vessel sailed an hour ago, on a six months' voyage. (*Mrs. M. buries her face in her hands.*) But cheer up. "While there's life, there's hope." I cabled to the port she is bound for to have the sailor arrested, and our child returned.

BRIDGET : The bloodthirsty ould pirate ! the cannibal ! the thafe ! Me ould mither used to say——

MR. MANLEY : Be quiet, Bridget,—so there is good reason to believe that our darling will yet be restored to us in safety.

(Noise at the door : enter Dor with shells, coral and a Japanese doll in her arms. JACK close behind.)

DOR : See, mamma ! see papa ! I found Santa Claus. He does not ride in a sleigh, but in a big ship. I've seen it ; and see what pretty things he gave me ! And here is Santa Claus' brother (pointing to Jack).

DETECTIVE JOHNS : Aha, my fine fellow ! you tried to play a sharp game, but you'll have to give it up for this time. Guess you won't sail on this voyage, nor on some voyages yet to come.

JACK (*stepping back*) : Hands off, sir ! Don't you touch me. I'm not ready to drop anchor in your port just yet.

MR. MANLEY (*to detective*) : You will please retain him in custody until he accounts for the possession of our child.

DOR : Oh, papa, don't let him be hurt, he's good. See what he gave me, and Santa Claus, too, he sent this to Mamie ; I asked him to. (*Gives a box of foreign make to MAMIE, who takes from it a shell necklace.*)

MRS. MANLEY (*to JACK*) : Explain yourself, my good fellow. (*Aside to MR. MANLEY.*) He has a good, kind face ; I feel that he has befriended us.

JACK (*touching his cap to MRS. MANLEY*) : Thank you, ma'am. (*To MR. MANLEY.*) You see, cap'n, I was going along the street towards the dock. The Sea Foam was nearly ready to sail and I was in haste to get aboard, when I sighted this little craft astrand and in distress to the nor'ard of here. I couldn't go on

and leave the little bark to go down in the storm, so I put hard-a-port and spoke her. She said her name was Dotty, and that she lived at home. I couldn't bring her into port with no more information than that, so I just took her aboard the Sea Foam, to ask the cap'n what to do. "Jack," says he, when I had told him my story, "I have a little girl at home, and, bless my eyesight, if this little one don't look a deal like her. Now, Jack," says he, "she has a father that loves her as I love my little one, and we must get her to him. The wind is fresh and we must put to sea at once. We'll have to take this voyage without you, Jack. You must go ashore, and find her parents and take her to them." So I just stepped ashore with the little one. We stopped in a shed till the rain was over. As we went up the street people were rushing about and crying, "Child lost!" I asked where the lost child lived, and I was directed here. I am very glad to return your child to you safe and sound.

DETECTIVE (*in a low tone to Jack*): And get the reward, too, of course. There is a big reward offered for the return of this child.

JACK: I did not know of it.

DETECTIVE: Well, there is—a hundred dollars. You're in a bad fix, but I can get you off. If I'll get you clear ye'll give me half, won't ye?

JACK: Yes, I'll give you half of what I take.

MRS. MANLEY: You have told your story in a straightforward manner, my good friend. We are deeply grateful to you for the care you have given our darling. I cannot express in words how much we are indebted to you.

MR. MANLEY: No, not in words, nor in any other way can we repay you, but I offer you this (*handing*

him a hundred dollar note), as a feeble expression of our gratitude to you.

JACK : Thank you, sir, but I cannot take it.

DETECTIVE : Take it. Half of it is mine, you know. You promised to give me half.

JACK : Yes, half of what I took. No, sir ; I can not take it. My mother would be ashamed of her boy if he took any reward for a service like this. I could not have the face to tell her, if I should do such a thing.

MR. MANLEY : I honor your manliness, and if you will not—

DETECTIVE (*interrupting*) : But my pay. I helped find the child.

MR. MANLEY : Yes, yes, my good man ; you shall not be forgotten. And (*to Jack*), I understand that you lost your voice bringing back my child.

JACK : Yes, sir ; but I will try to find something to do till the ship returns six months hence, and then I will ship in her again.

MR. MANLEY : In the meantime I will take you into my employ. I need a man at my warehouse who understands shipping, and I am sure you are just the one for that position. I will pay you good wages, and you shall room and board with my gardener. Can I engage your services till your next voyage ?

JACK : With pleasure, sir ; I am truly thankful to you, and I will try to serve you to the best of my ability.

MR. MANLEY : Our trouble now seems happily ended, and I am sure we can all truly say that this is indeed a—

ALL : Merry Christmas. (*Christmas music is played.*)

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